

Jeremiah 29:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Analysis

This verse intensifies the promise of verse 12 by specifying the condition and certainty of finding God. 'Ye shall seek me' uses *baqash* (בָּקַשׁ), meaning to search diligently, pursue earnestly, or strive to obtain—indicating intentional, sustained effort beyond casual interest. 'And find me' employs *matsa* (מָצָא), meaning to discover, attain, or encounter—promising certain success in this spiritual quest. The crucial condition follows: 'when ye shall search for me with all your heart' (*bekol-levavkem*, בְּכָל־לֵבְבְּכֶם). The Hebrew *lev* (לֵב, heart) represents the entire inner person—mind, will, emotions, and moral center. 'All your heart' demands total commitment, undivided loyalty, and wholehearted devotion, excluding half-hearted or duplicitous seeking. This echoes Deuteronomy 4:29 and anticipates Jesus' teaching that the greatest commandment requires loving God with all one's heart (Matthew 22:37). The promise that wholehearted seekers will 'find' God reveals His accessibility and desire for relationship—He doesn't hide from genuine seekers but makes Himself known. This passage refutes both the notion that God is unknowable and that superficial religion satisfies covenant relationship. It points to Christ, in whom God is fully revealed (John 14:9, Colossians 1:15).

Historical Context

This promise addressed exiles who might have thought God had abandoned them or become inaccessible outside the promised land. The condition of seeking 'with all your heart' distinguished genuine repentance from merely wanting relief from consequences. Jeremiah's ministry consistently emphasized that external religious

observance without heart transformation was worthless (Jeremiah 4:4, 9:25-26). The exile itself resulted from centuries of half-hearted covenant keeping—maintaining temple rituals while hearts pursued idols. Now, stripped of temple, land, and national sovereignty, the exiles had opportunity for authentic spiritual renewal. Historical evidence shows the exile produced profound theological maturation in Israel. The experience broke their attraction to idolatry permanently—post-exilic Judaism never returned to widespread idol worship. The synagogue system developed, centering on Scripture and prayer rather than sacrificial ritual. Figures like Daniel, Ezekiel, and later Ezra exemplified wholehearted devotion to God in exile. The return to Jerusalem (beginning 538 BC) demonstrated God's faithfulness to this promise, but the spiritual transformation mattered more than geographical restoration. Jesus later condemned the Pharisees for meticulous external observance while neglecting heart righteousness (Matthew 23:23-28), showing the lesson of Jeremiah 29:13 remained relevant.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does 'seeking God with all your heart' look like practically, and how does it differ from religious activity or intellectual knowledge about God?
2. How does this verse address the common claim that God is unknowable or impossible to find?

Interlinear Text

וּבְקִשְׁתֶּם	אֶת־י	וּמְצֵאתֶם	כִּי	תִדְרֹשׁ נִי	בְּכָל
And ye shall seek	H853	me and find	H3588	me when ye shall search	H3605
H1245		H4672		H1875	

לְבַבְכֶּם:

for me with all your heart

H3824

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 119:2 (Parallel theme): Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

Matthew 7:7 (Parallel theme): Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Psalms 119:10 (Parallel theme): With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

Jeremiah 24:7 (Parallel theme): And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

Joel 2:12 (Parallel theme): Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

Psalms 91:15 (Parallel theme): He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

Psalms 119:145 (Parallel theme): I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes.

2 Chronicles 31:21 (Parallel theme): And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.

Psalms 119:58 (Parallel theme): I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.

2 Chronicles 22:9 (Parallel theme): And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.

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